

UCLA Academic Senate

Committee on Data, Information Technology, and Privacy

November 1, 2023

Andrea Kasko, Chair
Academic Senate

Re: UCLA Policy: Public and Discretionary Statements by Academic Campus Units

Dear Chair Kasko,

At its October 20, 2023, meeting, the Committee on Data, Information Technology, and Privacy (CDITP) reviewed the draft of the UCLA Policy on Public and Discretionary Statement by Academic Campus Units. Members made the following comments:

The members of CDITP have significant concerns about the purpose, scope, and application of this proposed policy. Most problematically, the committee found the policy overly vague. While the committee appreciates a need to balance the relationships between collectives of faculty and individual faculty members, the draft fails to articulate why this policy is necessary and what this policy seeks to accomplish in regulating and limiting specific forms of speech on UCLA digital platforms. In particular, there were concerns about the lack of specificity as to how and when faculty speech was covered by this policy and to the particular nature of the Guidelines as applied to Social Media accounts that are not hosted on UCLA Domains. Further issues with the vague wording of the policy might be seen in how “Discretionary Statements” is poorly defined in the policy: an obituary for a colleague posted to a Department website could well be construed as ACU “comments on institutional...events.”

More broadly, members of CDITP wondered whether other public universities currently have such a policy. As it stands, this draft policy seems deeply under-considered: it does not address questions of, for example, how the archiving of Discretionary Statements should be covered by public record-keeping responsibilities. It also seems focused on a burdensome implementation of processes to emphasize what members of the university community cannot do. The committee urges the Administration to reconsider the necessity of the policy and to refine substantially the draft policy and its scope.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the proposed policy. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at fisher@humnet.ucla.com or via the Committee analyst, Renee Rouzan-Kay, at rrouzankay@senate.ucla.edu.

Sincerely,



Matthew Fisher, Chair
Committee on Data, Information Technology, and Privacy

cc: Kathleen Bawn, Vice Chair/Chair-Elect, Academic Senate
Jessica Cattelino, Immediate Past Chair, Academic Senate
April de Stefano, Executive Director, Academic Senate
Renee Rouzan-Kay, Senior Policy Analyst, Committee on Data, Information Technology, and Privacy
Members of the Committee on Data, Information Technology, and Privacy